

littenhouse Societ



RITTENHOUSE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

-November 15, 1960-

The first meeting of the Rittenhouse Society was held August 26, 1960 at the American Numismatic Association convention in the Statler-Hilton Hotel in Boston. Massachusetts. Present at this organizational meeting were:

> Q. David Bowers Binghamton, N.Y.

Walter H. Breen New York, N.Y.

Kenneth Bressett Racine.Wisconsin

Grover C. Criswell St. Petersburg Beach, Fla. Dr. George Fuld Baltimore, Md.

D. Wayne Johnson Sidney, Ohio

Kenneth W. Rendell Medford, Mass.

At the meeting Walter Breen presented the "charter" originally proposed for the Rittenhouse Society several years ago. This contained several suggestions for the society's name, including the adopted Rittenhouse Society. After reviewing other proposals in the old charter the members decided that many of the ideas (age requirements for members, for example) were obsolete and needed revision.

A slate of officers for 1960-1961 was nominated and voted on. Elected were: 1. David Bowers, president; Walter H. Breen, vice president and D. Wayne Johnson, secretary-treasurer. All of the members present contributed \$1.00 each to give the treasury a beginning.

work completed. A number of the ideas, requirements and policies already discussed or to be decided upon are enumerated below. Sometime during the next month take an hour or so and write your comments and suggestions for each of the items listed. Also mention any new ideas or suggestions that have been overlooked. Mail your comments to: Q. David Bowers; c/o Bowers Coin Co., Inc.; 70 Court St.; Binghamton, N.Y. The combined results of all the comments received will be then printed and distributed to the members for voting or further discussion.

- 1. Purpose of the Rittenhouse Society It was agreed that the general purpose of the R.S. is to be the encouragement and recognition of numismatic research and knowledge.
- 2. Membership age requirements Should a limitation be placed on age? Previously discussed were the possibilities that the age be limited to 30, 35 or 40 years with an honorary membership for older persons. It was noted that such ship. What about active R.S. members as they cross the age barrier?
- 3. Admission requirements What should the admission requirements be? Intense and knowledgeable interest in numismatics? The publication of numismatic articles and books? This is one of our most important problems.

- 4. Method of admission Should admission or consideration be by application or invitation? Should the R.S. be an honorary society or should it assume a more active status.
- 5. Size of membership Should the membership be limited to just a few members or should it comprise possibly one hundred or more members? How should membership inquiries be processed? Your president has received two or three inquiries from various people inquiring about the R.S. Other members report that they also have been asked about the R.S.
- 6. Meeting dates One meeting will be held annually at the convention of the American Numismatic Association. At this, the main meeting, the election of officers will take place. There are a number of possibilities for additional meetings e.g. conventions of M.A.N.A., N.E.N.A. or C.S.N.S. When would you be available for additional meetings? WANT constitutes a quorum for an official meeting?
- 7. Emblems, cards, etc. Should the R.S. have a seal or insignia? If so, how can it be made relevant to Dr. David Rittenhouse or the first U.S. mint? Did Dr. Rittenhouse have a distinctive crest or bookplate that could furnish some suggestions?...... D. Wayne Johnson agreed to furnish R.S. members with pocket identification cards.
- 8. Should the R.S. publisn? Should the R.S. undertake to publish research works and articles of its members? If so, how would such publications be financed and distributed? The American Numismatic Society presently publishes monographs of members. Should we follow their example? A number of persons have expressed dissatisfaction with the A.N.S. format....Speaking of the A.N.S., would the A.N.S. be displeased with the R.S.'s somewhat similar purposes? How would the R.S. differ from the A.N.S.?
- 9. Initiation fees It has been suggested that an initiation fee of \$25 to \$100 be charged new members. These amounts are similar to initiation fees charged by other groups and societies of similar composition. If the public image of the R.S. were satisfactory, membership would be regarded as an honor and a distinction and the imitiation fee would not be an objection. What do you think?
- 10. Dues Yearly dues should be collected from all members to finance correspondence, stationery, etc. An amount of \$2 fo \$5 per year would seem to be reasonable. Extra expenses at the beginning could be financed by donations or assessments. The paying of yearly dues by members would keep us posted on which members were still interested in the R.S. Inactive or disinterested members would be dropped for non-payment of dues.
- 11. Awards The presentation of a Rittenhouse Society Award at the annual A.N.A. convention was discussed and met with approval. Such award would be made to the convention exhibit displaying the most research or the most scientific presentation. Perhaps awards should be made also to the article and book of the year displaying the most original research.
- 12. Scope of R.S. interests Should the R.S. be limited to those interested in American material...U.S. coins, tokens, paper money, colonials, etc.? Should Canadian be included?

*** These are just a few of the things needing discussion. You will undoubtedly think of many more. Write your suggestions at your earliest convenience. Let's fully activate the Rittenhouse Society.

Margo Russell

July 8, 1988

Dear Kay and Champ:

How exciting, your invitation for Saturday! Thank you!

Since the ANA banquet on Saturday evening is a must for Farran Zerbe award winners, I must be there.

But I don't want to miss your fun!

What if Sande Elinson, ANS development officer, and I drove down just for your brunch? She has heard so much about you and would love to meet you and see your library. We'll invite Eric Newman to come with us since he, too, is probably planning to attend the ANA banquet.

If this meets with your approval, we will get directions to your house after the Bibliomania meeting Friday.

Anyway, we'll see you soon. . .

Bestest.

CC: Eric Newman Sande Elinson

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6450 Cecil Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 62105

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July 31, 1989

Mr. Kenneth W. Rendell 154 Wells Ave. Newton, MA 02159

Dear Ken:

How nice of you to send me a copy of your philosophical discussion with respect to the excitement which you and others, including myself, secure out of research and study. I began to read it with great enthusiasm and was even more pleased when I finished it.

I have studied and lectured on the Hofmann activities and you must have had quite a difficult time in this regard. No doubt Justin Schiller may have a modified opinion of some of your statements or shall I say a conflict problem.

I at least have stayed in numismatics, even though we lost you, but you are still a member of the Rittenhouse Society which will meet shortly in Pittsburgh at the A.N.A. Convention.

If you ever come to St. Louis, please see the coin and currency museum I operate and you will also enjoy seeing my numismatic library. There will be items you have never seen before.

Kindest personal regards,

Grie

EPN:bv



Mercantile Money Museum

Mercantile Tower Seventh & Washington St. Louis, Mo. 63101 314-421-1819

October 2, 1989

Mrs. Matthew H. Rothert 656 Graham Street Camden, AR 71701

Dear Janet:

roud of how hat way. You two made a wonderful team, with a combination of cultural accomplishment, organizational accomplishment, social accomplishment, and business accomplishment. I am sure that your family will carry on that tradition.

Anytime you are in St. Louis, please let us know so that we can be with you.

Cordially,

Eric P. Newman

bv



The Rittenhouse Society

Dav? Rittenhouse

October 4, 1990

Mr. Eric Newman 6450 Cecil Avenue St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Eric:

I'm a little behind on my correspondence, so I'm trying to catch up. I appreciate the acknowledgement of Denis Loring being added to the Rittenhouse Society.

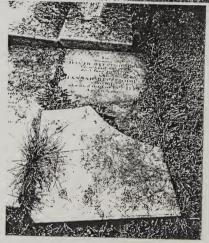
I have forwarded back issues of the Newsletter to Denis along with the $30 \, \mathrm{th}$ Anniversary elongated favor.

Best wishes,

Craig A. Whitford Secretary

P.S. I'm glad you liked the rolled quarter -- Hope to have something extra special for the next annual meeting.





HEADSTONE for first Mint Director David Rittenhouse lies broken in three pieces on his grave in the Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia. The shaded lettering remains amazingly intact after 202 year's weather.

--Photos by Dick Johnson

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 ["Rittenhouse contributed many articles to American Philosophical Society, served as curator, librarian, secretary, and vice-president, and was on many important committees. At Franklin's death he was elected president of the society, 7 Jan 1791, and by reelection continued until his death." --W.C.R.]
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 [Funeral oration after 26 June 1796 death.]
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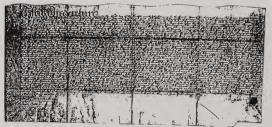
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Parchment Documents the Beginning of Paper Making in America

The parchment lease to the land on which America's first paper mill was built has been given to the Library Company by Mt. and Mrs. Carl B. Norberg of Ithaca, New York. William Rittenhouse established his mill in 1690 on 20 acres of land in Roxborough that is now part of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park. He and three silent partners (one of whom was the printer William Bradford) leased the land from Samuel Carpenter, a First Purchaser of 5,000 acres. The lease was to run for 99 years, and the rent was five shillings a year; it was a typical lease at a time when land was plentiful and money scarce. The lease was not put into writing until 1706, by which time the three partners had sold their shares to Rittenhouse, as the lease itself tells us. Its brief recital of the changes in the partnership in the preceding sixteen years is the best primary source we have for the early history of the mill.

In 1990 we borrowed the lease from Mr. and Mrs. Norberg anonymously for an exhibition marking the tercentenary of American papermaking, and we illustrated it on the cover of the catalogue. We also borrowed a dozen documents from the archives of the mill that were inherited by the late Nancy Rittenhouse Burke Price. These papers had all been made available in the 1860s to Horatio Gates Jones, who quoted from them extensively in his history of the mill, but after that they disappeared from public view. The papers quietly passed down through the family, but the lease appears to have been left behind in a frame on the wall when one of their horate in Georgian was sold in the 1920s. With the help of the Rittenhouse Family Association, we traced the papers and the lease and brought them together again for the exhibition. Mrs. Price gave us her papers in 1992, and now Mr. and Mrs. Notherg have decided to give their lease a permanent home in the same library. This lease is in effect the founding document of the American paper industry, one of the first manufactures to take root on this side of the Atlantic, and together with the Price papers it comprises the earliest substantial American business archive.



The 1706 lease to the land on which the Rittenhouse paper mill was built, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Carl B. Norberg

The Library Company of Philadelphia

1314 Locust Street Philadelphia, PA 19107

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Summer 1999

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A Tribute to the Numismatic Contributions of Walter Breen

Compiled by Members of the Rittenhouse Society

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The Rittenhouse Society Newsletter

Dav? Rittenhouse

"Bringing Us Closer Together"

Spring 1989

Volume 1, No. 1

Dear Friends,

WELCOME to the first issue of the NEW... Rittenhouse Society Newsletter!

In September Dave Bowers wrote "...in the first newsletter print as much as you can concerning the history of the Society." Within the pages of this issue I have reprinted a document written in 1976 which briefly outlines the history, goals and structure of our Society. At the conclusion of the document, I have included some of my thoughts for us to ponder.

Since this "first" issue opens the door for new input, I invite the entire membership to submit bits and pieces from personal archives relating to the Rittenhouse Society. Please give me a hand by sending photocopies of newsletters, previous minutes, press releases, articles, etc. along with your own personal recollections of our history. Then, in future issues of this newsletter we can begin to compile a true Society History.

One of the goals of your secretary is to keep this newsletter published on a quarterly basis. By doing so, it is my hope that we will all be brought closer together to exchange our thoughts and suggestions on how we can improve the Rittenhouse Society.

Since we are on the subject of "thoughts," I thought that you would enjoy reading an article I came across recently. Originally published in The Columbian Magazine for March, 1787, and perhaps reprinted for the first time in 202 years within the pages of this publication, are David Rittenhouse's thoughts "respecting the Generation of Clouds in the Atmosphere." I hope that you will find his thoughts enjoyable.

Also included in this issue is an idea for a proposed membership badge along with an up-to-date membership roster.

Until next time.

Crafg A. Whitford Secretary/Treasurer

Some thoughts and ideas on the Rittenhouse Society.....

After careful review of the preceding document and in specific the proposed structure of the Society; it is perhaps time to take another look and reestablish the structure and goals of our Society. With the publication of this newsletter, I hope that we can work to reactivate and stimulate all of us to make the Rittenhouse Society an active organization.

I invite (once again) each of you to communicate your comments and suggestions to me for publication in this newsletter for review and discussion. Perhaps we can discuss them in greater detail at the 1989 A.N.A. convention meeting of the Society.

I plan on having the next issue of the newsletter ready to be mailed by June 30, 1989. Please submit your comments, suggestions and ideas by June 15, 1989.

At this time I offer the following items for comment:

- 1. Activate the Awards goal outlined in the preceding document.
- 2. Jointly organize with the American Numismatic Society a "Coinage of the Americas Conference" for 1991 or 1992 with the subject matter relating to either the Mints of the Americas or the Mints of the United States. The latter topic could cover the history of all of the U.S. Mints as well as a look back at 200 years of organized coinage. Papers regarding the Colonial Mints could also be included.
- 3. Become active in promoting new authors of numismatic literature.
- 4. Compile and publish "The Papers of David Rittenhouse" as a Society. What a project!
- Work together on special projects for 1991 and 1992 promoting and educating people on the history of our Nation's Mint.
- Compile and publish a listing of articles, books, etc. previously published relating the the U.S.

PLANNING FOR PITTSBURGH '89

Now is the time for us to plan the 1989 meeting of the Rittenhouse Society. The Annual Convention of the American Numismatic Association will be held during the week of August 9-13, 1989 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center/Vista International Hotel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As in years past, I suggest that we meet in the convention hotel restaurant on Saturday, August 12, 1989 at 8:00 A.M. for breakfast and an informal meeting. If this seems like an excellent time for us to get together, please let me know and we'll make the arrangements. SEE YOU.....IN PITTSBURGH!

MINUTES OF THE 1988 RITTENHOUSE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

The 1988 meeting of the Rittenhouse Society was held on July 23, 1988 at the Clarion Hotel in Cincinnati, Ohio during the Annual Convention of the American Numismatic Association.

The meeting was "called-to-order" at 8:00 a.m. with the following members present: Ken Bressett, Q. David Bowers, Grover Criswell, R.W. Julian, Walter Breen, Eric Newman and Hank Spangenberger. Invited guests were: Margo Russell and Craig Whitford.

Introductions were made with breakfast following. There being no old business, none was discussed.

It was agreed by all in attendance that Margo Russell be accepted into the Society.

Ken Bressett then introduced Craig Whitford as a Rittenhouse enthusiast, and possessing a strong desire to become a member of the Society. Craig followed with a brief introduction of his background and interest in David Rittenhouse, including mention of William Rittenhouse, America's first papermaker, 1690 (More on this in a future issue of this newsletter). Discussion of the numismatic postcards produced by Craig's company followed. Everyone in attendance was given a set of 4 postcards entitled "Our First Mint."

Several interesting discussions followed, including one regarding the purchase of old copper by the first U.S. Mint for use in casting gears, etc. and not for direct use in copper planchets. The upcoming Bicentennial of the U.S. Mint in 1992 was also discussed.

In closing the informal gathering Ken Bressett discussed a probationary roll in the Society for Craig Whitford as Secretary/Treasurer for 1 year. Grover Criswell moved that Craig be accepted as an active member of the Society; Ken Bressett seconded the motion - All were in favor. The meeting was informally adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Rittenhouse Society Membership Badge Proposed

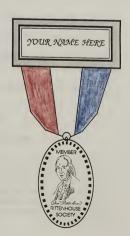
At the July 23, 1988 meeting of our Society the idea of a membership badge was informally discussed. Upon further thought, I offer the following idea.

Elongate Philadelphia Mint, 1932 Washington Quarter Dollars with a portrait of David Rittenhouse in relief on the reverse of the coin so that the date and bust of Washington continues visible on the obverse. A hole would then be placed at the top of the elongate for suspension from a Red, White and Blue Ribbon attached to a nameplate. The nameplate would contain an engraved brass plate bearing the member's name.

The 1932 Washington Quarter Dollar was selected for this project because it represents not only the Bicentennial of Washington's birth, but that of Rittenhouse as well. Also, this unique Washington/Rittenhouse portrait combination would honor two great men of the first Mint. Since this particular quarter was struck in Philadelphia, the birthplace of our nation's coinage, it makes for a truly unique numismatic combination and membership badge.

This special Membership Badge will be made available only to members of the Rittenhouse Society.

The cost of producing each Membership Badge combination will probably be in the range of \$10 to \$13 each, with the nameplate engraving perhaps being the most expensive part of the project. I suggest, and this is only a suggestion, that each of us provide \$25\$. to \$50, to open a Society account to begin working towards our goals (soon to be defined) and out of this amount we will have the membership badges produced. Again this is only a suggestion and your comments and ideas would be greatly appreciated. If all are in favor of this idea, we could have the badges in time for the 1989 meeting of the Society.





COLUMBIAN MAGAZINE,

For MARCH, 1787.

A Letter from Daven RITTENHOUSE, Esq. to the Hon. FRANCIS HOPKINGON respecting the Generation of Clouds an the Atmosphere.

(Read before the Philosophical Society, Feb. 16, 1787.) Bethlehem, Sept. 9, 1786.

M Y curiofity was so highly gra-tified a few days past, with a -the weather was very warm, with remarkable phoenomenon of our atmosphere, that I cannot forbear giving you an account of it; and if I can make the description but half as entertaining to you, as the prospect was to me, I shall think my labour well bestowed.

Some of the principal operations of nature, and fuch as one would think must almost every day be exposed to our observation, are nevertheless somehow unaccountably, and, as if by defign, carried on be-hind the curtain fo fecretly, that we are left almost entirely ignorant of the matter. If, therefore, once in half a century, we chance to catch nature off her guard, it becomes us to attend with diligence, and to give a just history of the experiment to others, for the improvement of our philosophical knowledge.

We often observe the clearest blue fky, in the course of a few hours, totally obscured by thick and dark clouds. But we know, very imper ? rated. It is of this process, how ever, that I am going to give you fome account.

The beautiful valley of Wyoming is bounded by two parallel ranges of mountains, four or five miles distant from each other, running N. E. and S. W. nearly. The river Sufque-hannah breaks abruptly through the N. W. mountain, a little above the mouth of Leehawanie; it afterwards continues running along the valley for many miles, towards the S. W. with frequent ferpentine windings. Wilksboroughissituatedonthe S.E. bank of the river, eight or nine miles below Leehawanie,-and at this place there is a very extensive view of both the mountains, as well towards the N. E. as the S. W.

On the 5th of September laft,

flying clouds from the S. W. until towards evening, when the lower clouds dispersed, and discovered a clear sky, with a few streaks of superior clouds, finely coloured, as usual, by the fetting fun. The moon wanted a little of being full, and appeared very beautiful about an hour in height above the eastern mountain. A little above the moon there passed a long narrow dark cloud, which firetched N. E. and S. W. farther than the eye could reach, and feemed to lye directly over, and parallel to the summit of the mountain. It appeared to move brifkly towards the N. W. and I expected it to pass off quickly, leaving a perfectly clear sky. Looking again towards the moon, a few minutes afterwards, I found the cloud greatly increased in breadth; its upper edge had advanced confiderably towards the zeraith; but its lower edge, where there seemed to be the greatest modition, had not changed place at all. I now found that the cloud was confeetly, how these clouds are gene- Finually augmented at its lower edge; and that a thousand little clouds were constantly generated in the clear air, just below the great cloud. which by a brifk motion upwards, presently attached themselves to it, whilft the whole body of the cloud, by a more gradual motion, proceeded northwestward. I gazed at this appearance for the space of two -hours, with pleasure and astonishment; during all which time the operation went on without any interruption, and with very little va-riety. By this time, the whole Heavens were obscured by very thick and dark clouds, excepting the narrow fireak between the caftern edge

of the cloud, and the mountain,

which still remained clear. I now went to bed, but have reason to be-

lieve, from the appearance next morning, that the cloud continued forming in the fame manner during the whole night. Early next morning it began to rain a little, and more distant clouds arriving from the S. E. closed the fcene.

When I first observed this appearançe, a low cloud was just visible over the top of the mountain, and continued there the whole evening. It feemed to move flowly towards the N. E. This convinced me that the brisk current of air, which I felt constantly from the S. E. did not reach much beyond the moun-

If we attempt an explanation of this phenomenon, the first difficulty that occurs is, whence could be derived that continual supply of fresh air, loaded with vapours, which furnished matter for such a prodigious quantity of clouds? It could not be from the N. W. for the cloud moved in that direction, northy a low counter current, for the lower air was felt constantly the same way; It could not be from the S. E. for a low cloud was feen the whole time hovering a little beyond the mountain, and moving flowly in a different direction. I conclude, therefore, that it was by a direct precipitation of the superior air along the fummit of the mountain coccasioned probably by its coldness: for the next morning, in croffing the mountain, I found myself involved in a cold mift, which obliged me to wrap my coat close about me, tho!

the air in the valley was still warm. If the air descended directly on the mountain, it appears that the cloud or vapour, as foon as it was separated from the air, in which it had been diffolved, became lighter and mounted upwards with a quick motion, at the fame time that it moved N. W. from the mountain : at least it seemed to do so : or, if this rifing was only apparent, the motion of the detached parts of the cloud must bave been much swifter at first, than it became a few minutes afterwards.

I shall conclude with proposing this query. Are not the cold fummits of mountains the great and general means employed by nature. for precipitating the waters from the atmosphere, wherein they had been held in a flate of folution, and thereby producing rains?

I am, dear Sir, Your's fincerely, DAVID RITTENHOUSE.

F. Hopkinson, Esq.



The Rittenhouse Society Newsletter

Dav? Rittenhouse

"Bringing Us Closer Together"

Summer 1989

Volume 1, No. 2

You're Invited to the Annual Meeting of the Rittenhouse Society

Vista International Hotel Pittsburgh, Penna.

Saturday, August 12, 1989 8 o'clock in the morning

"Dutch treat" Breakfast
Spouses are Welcome!

We will meet in the Hotel Lobby

Dear Friends.

First I would like to thank all of you who wrote me expressing your views and suggestions for a new and progressive Society. I love to receive mail...so keep those letters coming.

I also appreciate those words of encouragement on the first issue of the Rittenhouse Society Newsletter. It's only through your help that I can continue to keep us informed and enlightened.

Unfortunately though, I did not receive any information relating to the past history of our Society. I would like to encourage all of you to go into your files and send me copies of whatever you have. Better yet, bring them to our annual meeting.

I apologize for the delay in sending this issue out. It has been quite busy in the Whitford household with the arrival of our 5th bundle of joy - Jessica Mae on June 3rd.

There is plenty to review, digest and consider in this pre-ANA issue.

NEW MEMBERS PROPOSED

Mark S. Auerbach proposed by Ron Guth

Neil Shafer proposed by Dave Bowers & Ken Bressett The Annual Meeting of the Rittenhouse Society is scheduled for Saturday, August 12, 1989 at 8:00 AM at the convention hotel restaurant. You and your spouse are invited to this "Dutch treat" breakfast.

See you in Pittsburgh,

Craig A. Whitford Secretary/Treasurer

AN UPDATE....from the last issue of the Rittenhouse Society Newsletter

In regards to the six ideas suggested in the last issue, the following responses were received from the membership.

1. THE RITTENHOUSE AWARD(S).

It was the general consensus of those responding that we should activate the "Rittenhouse Award." This award would be given to the A.N.A. exhibit which displays the most original research. A second award would be provided annually for the book or article which puts forth the most original research.

2. ANS COAC CONFERENCE IDEA

This idea brought mixed reactions as to whether this was to energetic for our Society.

3. PROMOTE NEW AUTHORS.

This idea was well received. The big question was HOW?

4. "THE PAPERS OF DAVID RITTENHOUSE"

It was suggested that this project was also perhaps beyond our reach.

5. SPECIAL U.S. MINT BICENTENNIAL PROJECTS.

Another very well received idea. Several suggestions have been offered and are published within,

6. Compilation of Books and Articles relating to the U.S. Mint.

Again perhaps beyond our reach.

MEMBERSHIP BADGE UPDATE

The idea of an elongate membership badge produced mixed reviews. Two further ideas were offered by members and are perhaps better suited for our Society. The following ideas are proposed for discussion at our annual meeting,

1. U.S. MINT RITTENHOUSE MEDAL.

Acquire a sufficient quantity of the U.S. Mint Rittenhouse Medal, grind off the reverse and engrave with the name of the Society, name of the member and year entered into the Society. This medal would then be drilled and tapped with a hanger for suspension from a ribbon and nameplate.

2. OUR OWN MEDAL.

Since tremendous support was voiced concerning the establishment of an annual Rittenhouse Awards, the idea of producing a Society Medal was proposed. This idea could serve the needs of our Society in several ways:

- A) An Official Membership Badge. Perhaps a quantity could be struck in a precious metal, specifically for the membership badge.
- B) A Society Fund Raising Project. A Society Medal produced in a limited edition (or unlimited) would allow us the opportunity to raise some of the funds necessary to carry out the goals of our Society.
- Rittenhouse Awards. Uniface examples could be struck for attachment to award plaques.

Please give some thought to these and any other ideas which you may have regarding our official membership medal and badge.

A SUGGESTED RITTENHOUSE SOCIETY PROJECT FOR 1992

"MINT MARKERS"

By Ken Bressett

The opportunity for our Society to do something significant to mark the bicentennial of the United States Mint is too important to be put off or missed. The items presented for consideration in the last newsletter all have merit, and give rise to a project that I would like to suggest where we could participate and bring some recognition to the Society.

I have already proposed to the American Numismatic Association that as part of their Centennial celebration in 1991, they could identify and mark the various mints that operated in this country from 1652 to 1852. In other words from the Colonial period through the Territorial issues.

Some of these historic mints already have markers to identify their location, but most do not as far as I can tell. Perhaps some, like the Hull mint in Boston, simply cannot be located today. But if it can it deserves a marker.

The ANA feels that they can only assist in suggesting that the project be carried out by local coin clubs or historical societies. They cannot fund the project or even provide the markers. In fact they do not know what mints to honor or where they are located. This is where the Rittenhouse Society can help. We can produce a list of the mint sites that should be marked, and try to establish the location. Perhaps we can also design a marker that would be similar for each mint, and that would recognize the ANA and Rittenhouse Society for their participation. Perhaps we could even find a way to raise some money for the project.

What are your thoughts on the subject? Can we as a Society work to produce a list of mints that should be marked along with a list of those currently marked?

MORE SUGGESTIONS FOR A PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY

By Dick Johnson

1. Commission a Documentary Film on Early Mint History.

While costly, this would appeal to today's film oriented society; it is also something that can be shown at coin functions, on TV, and even sold in video cassette form.

I would recommend the Wolper firm which did such an excellent film on Augustus Saint-Gaudens recently.

2. Form a "Friends of the United States Mint Society."

It seems every local library now has a "Friends of the..." organization which aids the group in diverse ways. Often this is aid in which the bureaucracy cannot move enough (or cannot move at all). There are things we could do for the U.S. Mint which it cannot do for itself (see next item, for example). Continued On Page 4

Continued From Page 3

3. Help Merchandise the U.S. Mint Bicentennial Event.

There is a growing trend for non-government organizations developing funds for government activities. Like the Inaugural Committee that raises \$10-\$12 million for the inauguration of each new president. These funds are raised (don't be surprised!) by selling products! Some of the top manufacturers in America become involved in these projects.

Perhaps the same thing could be done for the Mint (and I see now that the Mint is trying to raise an "enterprise fund" for a similar function).

There is a firm here in Connecticut which does this type of work for non-profit organizations. Basically it creates the products, prepares the catalog, and sees that it is mailed to the organization's own mailing list.

The Mint is blessed with one of the best mailing lists in the field. If we could help develop a line of products for the Bicentennial anniversary, and this catalog is mailed to the Mint's list, this would be a sure winner. Both in products and in sales.

Could you see Tiffany creating a bowl in silver honoring the U.S. Mint? Can you see the National Geographic creating a 4-color book on the history of the Mint? Can you see Time-Life-Warner creating a newstand publication?

Can you think of a product or firm which would like to be connected with this project?

4. Our own Publications.

I have one in hand for possible publication. This very scarce 3-part article published in the *Philadel-phia Dispatch* in January and February 1853. It is a 15,000 word visitto the Mint and explains every department and every function within the Mint at that time. It is one of the best descriptions during that period I have read.

I have never seen any reference to it; yet it is outstanding for its clarity and detail. It should be made available to numismatic readers of the next century.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT Where do we go from here?

This issue puts forth many new and innovative ideas with which our Society can grow. Perhaps for the first time since the Society was formed we have the means to actively communicate with one another.

The organizational letter published in the last issue of this newsletter stated that the "General purpose of the Society is the encouragement and recognition of numismatic research and knowledge." This single statement requires action.

Our purpose is quite clear. What remains unclear is how we will make it all happen. What are our membership requirements? How would we reject a member felt to be unsuited? Is writing or authorship necessary to be a member? Should we have membership dues? What are or should be our goals? Should our Society become much larger in terms of membership?

All of these questions have been raised by several members and discussion and action is required before we can proceed with our goals.

One member wrote that "We have a pool of talent among our members that is unmatched in American numismatics today. We should put this talent to good use..."

We should put this talent to good use. As a Society we have the opportunity to make our goals happen. Before our annual meeting, please give some time and thought to our Society. Our purpose and goals need your input. We need to answer the question of "Where do we go from Here?"